

*Saluting Employees***Garza West Sergeant Maria Cantu
named TGIA CO of the Year****Sergeant Maria Cantu**

During a June conference held in San Antonio, Garza West Sergeant Maria Cantu accepted the 2017 Texas Gang Investigators Association Correctional Officer of the Year award.

Cantu has 15 years of service with TDCJ, with seven years' experience as a sergeant. She

fulfills a critical role as the Security Threat Group sergeant at one of the agency's largest intake facilities and, with the assistance of one other officer, she is responsible for screening incoming offenders for possible gang involvement and ensuring they are assigned to appropriate secure housing.

"Sergeant Cantu is a huge asset to Garza West and the entire Garza Complex," noted Warden Bryan Gordy. "She is looked up to and respected by staff, and is always willing to help out by responding to any situation. We are proud to have Sergeant Cantu as part of our TDCJ and Garza West family."

TDCJ Deputy Executive Director Oscar Mendoza attended the San Antonio conference and commented on Cantu's award, saying "Sergeant Cantu plays an integral role in gathering gang intelligence during the intake process. She is certainly deserving of this recognition."

Cantu was honored to receive the award saying, "It represents the hard work and dedication to accomplish the task at hand. As a Gang Officer we must love the job, every day is a learning experience and I thank those who nominated me." ▲